



Public Hearing – March 9, 2022
Before the Planning & Development Committee
Submitted by James Berardino on behalf of the Connecticut Council of Small Towns

RE: SB 323 – An Act Establishing a Municipal Tree Removal Account

Dear Chairs, Co-chairs, Ranking Members, and esteemed members of the Planning & Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill on behalf of the Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST).

COST strongly **SUPPORTS** SB 323 which would establish a municipal tree removal account to provide grants to municipalities for the removal of dead, dying and hazardous trees, tree limbs and tree branches from municipal property and municipal roads.

Tree removal has become a substantial challenge for many of Connecticut's smaller communities due to rising costs in recent years and the sheer number of trees that must be removed because of myriad invasive species. In addition, towns with small public works departments are having a difficult time finding outside contractors that are available to do the work.

Some towns have indicated in recent years that tree removal costs had doubled (and this was before the pandemic and the ensuing inflation). Given the public safety concerns, towns can't put off removing trees even if their budget has been exhausted, creating an imperative need for this municipal tree removal account and the monies that have been allocated to it.

Given the public safety concerns associated with dead and decaying trees along roadways, COST urges the committee's **favorable passage** of the bill.